

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KUWAIT 03731 071007Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8430
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USCINCEUR/VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 3731

EXDIS

CINCEUR HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE PASS POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, MILI, LE, US, IS
SUBJECT: REBUILDING THE LEBANESE ARMY: US ASSISTANCE

REF: STATE 155131

1. I WOULD EXPECT THE GOK'S REACTION TO A PROPOSAL
THAT THEY CONTRIBUTE TO FINANCING THE FORMATION OF
A UNIFIED LEBANESE NATIONAL ARMY TO BE A VERY
CAUTIOUS ONE. IN THE FIRST INSTANCE, THE GOK HAS
FOLLOWED A POLICY OF NOT PROVIDING MONEY DIRECTLY
FOR THE PURCHASE OF ARMAMENTS FOR ANOTHER COUNTRY.
IT HAS BEEN WILLING TO CONTRIBUTE MONEY FOR
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES, HOWEVER, FULLY
COGNIZANT OF THE FACT THAT ITS CONTRIBUTION WOULD
ENABLE THE GOVERNMENT CONCERNED TO DIVERT FUNDS TO
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THE PURCHASE OF ARMS.

2. WHILE THE GOK IS, OF COURSE, VERY CONCERNED ABOUT
THE REHABILITATION OF LEBANON--WITNESS THE ACTIVE
ROLE OF ITS AMBASSADOR IN THE FOUR POWER
COMMITTEE IN BEIRUT, IT WILL ALSO HAVE TO KEEP IN
MIND THE IMPACT OF ANY SUCH ACTION IN THIS REGARD

ON THE PALESTINIANS, BOTH AT PLO HEADQUARTERS AND IN KUWAIT ITSELF. IF THE PLO WERE PUBLICLY TO OPPOSE THE REBUILDING OF A NATIONAL LEBANESE ARMY, I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT TO CONVINCE THE GOK TO CONTRIBUTE MONIES WHICH, IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, WOULD PAY FOR ARMING SUCH A MILITARY FORCE. WHILE THE KUWAITIS MIGHT NOT OPPOSE THIS ACTION IF UNDERTAKEN BY THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT, I DOUBT THAT THEY WOULD SUPPORT IT EVEN INDIRECTLY, UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES.

3. THE GOK MIGHT ALSO REGARD A PROPOSAL FOR REBUILDING THE NATIONAL LEBANESE ARMY AS PREMATURE IN LIGHT OF THE FACT THAT SOME SORT OF POLITICAL COOPERATION AMONG THE VARIOUS ELEMENTS IN THE LEBANESE BODY POLITIC HAS NOT YET BEEN ESTABLISHED. THIS ATTITUDE HAS OBVIOUSLY AFFECTED THEIR WILLINGNESS TO MAKE SUBSTANTIAL FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION OF LEBANON, ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE BEEN AGREEABLE TO THE PROVISION OF SOME FUNDS FOR SO-CALLED HUMANITARIAN PURPOSES THROUGH THE KUWAIT AND ARAB FUNDS.

4. NEVERTHELESS, IS SUCH A PROJECT COULD BE MOUNTED AND IF IT WERE TO RECEIVE THE ENDORSEMENT OF CONFIDENTIAL

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SAUDI ARABIA, SYRIA, EGYPT AND JORDAN, THE GOK MIGHT BE PERSUADED TO MAKE AN INDIRECT FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION WHICH WOULD HELP LEBANON REARM. THE PARTICIPATION OF THE US WOULD BE AN INFLUENCING FACTOR, ALTHOUGH IT IS DIFFICULT TO PREDICT AT THIS STAGE WHETHER IT WOULD BE A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE FACTOR, PARTICULARLY IF THERE WERE STRENUOUS PLO OPPOSITION TO AN AMERICAN ROLE.

5. I SPOKE BRIEFLY TO FOREIGN MINISTER SABAH AL-AHMAD ON JULY 6 AT DINNER HE GAVE IN HONOR OF VISITING PDRY PRIME MINISTER AND SUGGESTED THAT IT MIGHT BE USEFUL FOR US TO REVIEW DEVELOPMENTS WHICH HAD TAKEN PLACE SINCE WE LAST MET. HE WAS AGREEABLE TO THIS AND ASKED THAT I COME TO SEE HIM SOMETIME DURING THE NEXT WEEK. I COULD IF AUTHORIZED BY THE DEPARTMENT, DISCUSS THIS QUESTION IN A GENERAL WAY WITHOUT INDICATING ANY US COMMITMENT TO THE IDEA. PLEASE ADVISE.
MAESTRONE

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